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## 'Fireproof' to follow 'Facing Giants'

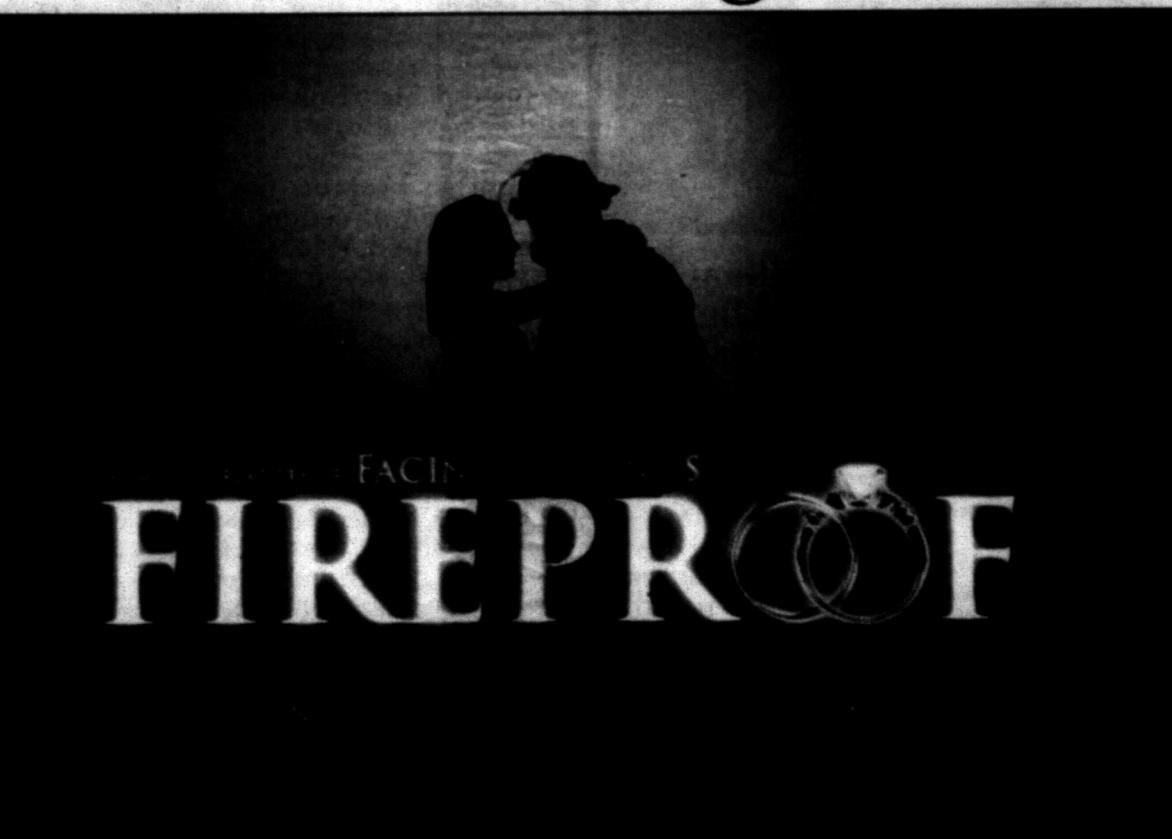
ALBANY, Ga. (BP) — If standing ovations are any indication, the makers of *Facing the Giants* probably have another hit on their hands.

Sherwood Pictures' latest film, *Fireproof*, won't release in theaters until Sept. 26, but it's been screened for pastors and Christian leaders all summer, and often to enthusiastic crowds. At the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis, between 3,000-4,000 people saw the film, with many standing during the closing credits to applaud the movie's focus on a biblical view of marriage.

The plot focuses on the struggling marriage of a firefighter named Caleb (played by Kirk Cameron) and his wife Catherine (Erin Bethea), both of whom are seeking a divorce after having fallen "out of love." Their lack of communication and their disagreements over finances — as well as his addiction to Internet pornography and her budding romance at work — are tearing them apart.

Caleb's father, though, refuses to see the young couple split up and gives his son a "Love Dare" journal, a 40-day experiment in which Caleb must complete a loving action toward his wife each day. Having rescued numerous people from fires, Caleb sets out to rescue his own marriage and his wife's heart.

The movie had a \$500,000 budget, which is still tiny by Hollywood standards but five times the \$100,000 budget of *Facing the Giants* and 25 times the budget of Sherwood's first movie, *Flywheel*. The bigger budget — particularly during fire-fighting scenes, where special effects were required — is evident on the screen.



It is expected to open on significantly more screens and in more cities than did *Facing the Giants*.

"They just keep knocking them out of the park. I've seen every one of them," said Jim Ballard, a Utah-based North American Mission Board missionary who saw a screening of the movie this summer. "I think this is going to address some major issues with marriages, and it's got enough evangelism in it that people can get saved."

Sherwood Pictures is a not-for-profit ministry of Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., and the brainchild of brothers Stephen and Alex Kendrick, two associate pastors who have written, produced, and directed all three films. Just like the previous two films, *Fireproof* features a volunteer cast and crew, with church members holding the majority of the roles.

Approximately 1,200 people were involved, doing everything from cooking for the cast and crew to acting. Cameron, known for his role in several Christian films as well as his star role in the 1980s and early 1990s ABC sitcom *Growing Pains*, turned down a payment for the film and asked instead that a donation be made to a ministry he and his wife run, Camp Firefly.

To prepare for his role as a fire-fighting captain, he worked out and gained about 15 pounds.

With one out of every two marriages in the U.S. ending in divorce, officials with Sherwood Pictures hope that churches get behind the film and help couples learn how to "fireproof" and strengthen their own marriages.

They've launched two websites: [FireproofTheMovie.com](http://FireproofTheMovie.com), which is the official movie website, and [FireproofMyMarriage.com](http://FireproofMyMarriage.com), which has resources for singles, couples, and churches. Additionally, B&H Publishing Group is scheduled to release a paperback version of *The Love Dare* book around the time of the movie's release in September.

Groups such as the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Focus on the Family, and FamilyLife have backed the film and are urging people to go see it.

"Obviously, we think that marriage is a crucial issue to address in our culture — inside and outside the church," said Michael Catt, executive producer of the film and senior pastor of Sherwood Church.

"[Marriage has] become simply a contract, a piece of paper. We hope that the movie is going to impact homes, not only inside the church but outside the church, because every one of us knows a couple that struggles; either we are or we know somebody who is."

"If couples learn some things out of this film that will help them in their marriage, then it will be successful to us. If we can help save some marriages that are on the brink of going off a cliff, it would be great."

Catt is hoping churches get behind *Fireproof* just like they got behind *Facing the Giants*. One significant role churches and associations can play, he said, is by "buying out" screens.

"The key to that was churches; the key to that was pastors standing up in their pulpits and saying, 'We gripe about Hollywood. Here's something positive. It's a film we can go to and support.'



RESCUE — Kirk Cameron's character Caleb Holt endangers his own life in this rescue scene from the movie *Fireproof*. (Photo courtesy of Tood Stone/Sherwood Pictures)



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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July 17 was a red-letter day for Mississippians, but many may have missed the significance of the Mississippi Gaming Commission's firm refusal to skirt state law and thereby open a new chapter in the gamblers' march to take over the state.

In a unanimous vote after a six-hour hearing at the Biloxi Community Center, gaming commissioners denied RW Development's plan to have their proposed casino site at Highway 90 and Veterans Boulevard in Biloxi declared a legal gambling site. Problem was, it clearly is not a legal site under state law. Gaming commissioners knew that going in to the hearing and surely so must have RW Development, which is run by native Mississippian and Mississippi State University graduate Ray Woolridge.

Reflecting the pressure brought to bear on the state's three gaming commissioners, Woolridge told WLOX-TV after the vote, "When you look at what was presented, it was absolutely no rationale for making that decision that it was not a legal site," said Woolridge. "I think it was a mistake. The decision was a mistake."

Here's the rub. After Hurricane Katrina wiped out the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2005, the Legislature rushed to Jackson at Governor Haley Barbour's call to push through a sweetheart deal that allowed casinos to move 800 feet onshore from their previous moorings over the waters of the Gulf.

Legislators even allowed rights-of-way such as Highway 90 and public utilities to be excluded from the 800-feet count, meaning gamblers are now able to move considerably farther inland than 800 literal feet. RW Development took full advantage of the 800 feet and rights-of-way exclusion to declare their casino site legal. They needed every foot of it — and then some.

RW Development also wanted gaming commissioners to declare the seawall, built in the early 1900s, to be declared the legal beginning of the 800-feet measurement and not the mean high tide water line as specified in the Legislature's sweetheart deal with the gamblers — a difference of possibly several hundred feet obviously in RW Development's favor.

Groups that were opposed to the Legislature's sweetheart deal with the gamblers in 2005 predicted that 800 feet would not be enough for the gamblers, and that the sweetheart deal would soon be put to the test. They were right.

Thankfully, gaming commissioners saw through the smoke and mirrors and voted without dissent to kill the RW Development scheme. To do otherwise would have turned state law upside down and, as several observers pointed out, pushed casinos into areas never intended for gambling.

The most pathetic part of the Biloxi hearing was the steady stream of legislators who testified in favor of the RW Development scheme and attempted to persuade commissioners to approve the RW Development scheme. The pro-gambling legislators who testified included Rep. John Hohm of Jackson, Rep. Randall Patterson of Biloxi, Rep. Michael Janus of Biloxi, and (by letter read by Janus) Rep. Jim Simpson Jr. of Gulfport.

## A firm 'no'



**SITE DEBATE** — Dan M. McDaniel Jr. (standing) of the Phelps Dunbar law firm in Jackson addresses Mississippi Gaming Commission members and staff July 17 regarding the suitability of a casino site proposed by RW Development of Biloxi. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Rep. Bobby Moak of Bogue Chitto, chairman of the House Gaming Committee, testified that he didn't believe the Legislature would second-guess whatever decision the Gaming Commission made — clear signal that there would be no repercussions if commissioners approved the site.

The simple fact that seemed to elude all those legislators is, if the Legislature had intended for the seawall to be the beginning point for the 800-feet rule, then why didn't they clearly state that in their 2005 sweetheart deal instead of plainly writing the mean high tide water line into the law?

Truly, the gambling/political complex in Mississippi won't be content until there are slot machines on the Tennessee state line. Don't be surprised if they attempt to change the law during the next legislative session to favor schemes such as RW Development has proposed.

If that happens, you'll know the gambler's takeover of the state's politicians is almost complete, and the Tennessee line is only a short distance away.

### GUEST OPINION:

## Discipling Children

By Don Hicks  
Miss. Baptist Convention Board

the beginning of a life long journey of growing as a disciple.

When we talk about discipling our children, we need to remember there is not a special or different way for a child to become a Christian as opposed to the way adults become disciples of Christ. This causes us to seek to find the time that a child has developed enough mentally and spiritually to understand God's plan for salvation. This is a great enough challenge to send us directly to the Holy Spirit for help discerning when a child is ready to understand and receive the Lord.

One of the ways churches can support parents and others who minister to children is by offering training in effective ways to lead a child to Christ as Lord and Savior.

This training should include a study of how to know when a child has reached the age of accountability. The study should also offer help in developmentally appropriate ways to talk to a child about having a relationship with Christ — that is, to make disciples among older children. This training in making disciples should include training that will help parents and teachers know how to help the children also continue to grow as disciples.

Another way churches can support parents in discipling their children is to offer a class for children who are new Christians. A worthy approach to training children should emphasize parental involvement. One way to do

this would be through daily Bible studies for the child to do with his parent.

Of course, when a child is reached who does not have good parental support, the church's new Christian class and on-going involvement in the child's life becomes even more important to that child's growth as a disciple.

Every church that loves children and wants to take Jesus' Great Commission seriously must determine if they are being effective in discipling children. Why not ask your deacons and pastor, Sunday School leaders and teachers, or Leadership Team to study your church's effectiveness in reaching the children growing up in your church and community? Be sure to include the inactive members of your church and Sunday School in this study.

Jesus said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me," (Mark 10:14). If we truly believe that statement, we will do everything we can to bring His little ones to Him.

Hicks is preschool/children's consultant in the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

# Iranian Christians forced to flee country

ANKARA, Turkey (BP) — Days after his release from a month of interrogations and torture under secret police custody, Iranian Christian Mohsen Namvar has fled across the border into Turkey with his family.

Traveling by train, the badly beaten Christian arrived July 2 in eastern Turkey with his wife and son. Namvar, 44, had been held incommunicado by a branch of Sepah (the Iranian Revolutionary Guards) from May 31 until June 26, when authorities told his family they were releasing him "temporarily."

Although the secret police demanded \$43,000 in bail, officers refused to issue a court receipt for the family's cash payment.

At the time of his release, Namvar was experiencing

fever, severe back pain, extremely high blood pressure, uncontrollable shaking of his limbs, and recurring short-term memory loss.

"I have no doubt they wanted to kill me," Namvar told Compass Direct News.

Namvar, who converted from Islam to Christianity as a teenager, attributed his severe physical mistreatment to his refusal to give the police any names or information about other converts and house church groups in Iran.

In the spring of 2007, Namvar had been arrested and severely tortured with electrical shocks allegedly for baptizing Muslims who had become Christians. Three months after back surgery for those injuries, he regained the ability to walk but still suf-

fered pain and discomfort. He still cannot stand or sit for extended periods of time.

An Amnesty International confirmed he was arrested May 31, "at his home in Tehran by eight police officers who refused to tell him why he was being arrested. They took his computer, printer, CDs, books, and money."

In Ankara, Namvar presented himself to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR to apply for status as an asylum-seeker. The UNHCR assigned Namvar and his family to relocate in one of 30 designated satellite cities in Turkey, where he is required to sign in daily at the local police station.

The family must wait 11 months, until June 8, 2009, for a UNHCR interview in which they will detail their reasons for requesting asylum.

"We are tired in our minds and very sad," Namvar's wife Fereshteh said after learning they must wait nearly a year in Turkey before even presenting her husband's case. "We were under so much pressure in Iran, and again we are facing it here."

While her husband was under arrest, she told of being subjected to a second police ransacking of their home, repeated telephone calls filled with slander and death threats, and one attempt to kidnap their son from his school.

Namvar said he was surprised that the interviewing officer at the UNHCR spent only six minutes registering information from their passports. Following standard UNHCR protocol, the official did not ask why they had fled from their country, nor did he collect copies of documents they had brought concerning his case.

Nearly 15,000 applications for refugee or asylum status are now in process at the Ankara office, which is the largest UNHCR center in Europe apart from the Geneva headquarters.

UNHCR external affairs officer Metin Corabatir told Compass, "... even if they have strong evidence for their

case, at best it takes three to four years for someone to be resettled through our office."

Although he earned his living as a miner, Namvar had been active in preaching and teaching the message of Christ across northern Iran since the early 1990s. His first brush with the authorities came when he was caught in 2001 giving out Christian literature at a gas station.

"I spent three days in jail," he recalled. After that, local police demanded that he obtain permission each time he wanted to enter the city near his home, in effect banning him from the region.

"The police created a very bad atmosphere there against us," Namvar said, "so no one would even respond to our greetings on the street." Because of this, Namvar moved his family to Tehran but was unable to find work due to his police record and the requirement on all job applications to state his religion.

For the past seven years, he has supported himself by translating books from English into Farsi, while continuing to visit and minister among various house church groups.

"I never knew God until Jesus showed Himself to me in a dream," Namvar said of his conversion to Christianity 29 years ago, "but ever since then, I have followed Jesus and told others about Him."

Under Iran's hard-line Shiite government, a Muslim who converts to Christianity has committed apostasy, which is punishable by death.

Iranian Christians Mahmood Matin and Arash Bandari have been jailed since May 15 in Shiraz, where they were arrested on "suspicion" of apostasy.

Under a draft law under discussion in the Iranian parliament, the "optional" death penalty now in force for apostasy would become obligatory.

Compass Direct News, based in Santa Ana, Ca., provides reports on Christians worldwide who are persecuted for their faith. Used by permission. The Amnesty International report was obtained from a separate source.

## MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

### THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND  
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

### Looking back

10 years ago

First Church, Kosciusko, observes its 150th anniversary beginning Aug. 9 with a series of three services. Speakers for the services include pastor Barry Corbett, Morris Chapman, Bill Causey, and Bobby Waggoner.

20 years ago

The youth choir of First Church, Waynesboro, sings on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, DC, at the invitation of Congressman Trent Lott.

50 years ago

Overflow crowds attend the county-wide tent revival sponsored by the Baptist churches of Tallahatchie County. The evangelistic campaign was directed by E.J. Daniels of Orlando, Fla.

# BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004  
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TDC GBN YABFECAWQ  
QBFS QBA JFQA QBTQ  
ZW-ZD QBN YOFQBOA'W  
ANA, YSQ RAOMAZPAWQ  
DFQ QBA YATJ QBTQ ZW  
ZD QBZDA FGD ANA?

ESIA WZU: XFOQN-FDA.  
Clue: : J=M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Nine Five.

## ROLY-POLLIES

In recent months, I have been reintroduced to the roly-poly. I grew up finding, catching, and playing with roly-polies. For those of you who are uneducated and do not know what a roly-poly is, you have lived a sheltered and unenlightened life. I would encourage you to find a friend and get up to speed because you cannot be a well-educated, intellectually astute, culturally balanced person without knowing what a roly-poly is. Just so that you will know, they are little gray creatures ranging somewhere between one-fourth of an inch and maybe one-half inch long. They appear to have a shell somewhat like an armadillo. They crawl around in yards, on the side of roads, and usually can be found in flowerbeds. You may have even seen them and did not know what they were.

With that information, let me say again that just recently I was reintroduced to these little gray creatures by one of my grandkids. Of course, it was a grandson playing with bugs and specializing in roly-polies. It appears to me that he is focused on becoming a roly-polyologist, if there is such a thing and he can make a living capturing and playing with roly-polies. When my grandson and I were playing with the roly-polies, I began to reexamine them and to think about what a remarkable little creature it is and what an amazing kind of protection God offers to the roly-poly.

There are significant insights and parallels for those of us who know the Lord and the security that God brings to us. As you



# Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

think about it and look at a roly-poly, you begin to realize how small they are and how defenseless they seem to be. Their initial security is found in that gray, curved shell body that God has given them. While they may not be all powerful, other large creatures hundreds of times bigger than they are may come walking around and stomping in their territory and they are able to stand up under the weight of the load. It is amazing and that is the kind of strength that God provides for His people. Virtually every day most of us face one or two experiences or go through some trauma that apart from the strength of God we could not hold up. Paul writes and tells us as believers that God has provided for us in the midst of life's battle. He says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). We can be clothed and equipped so that when Satan comes with temptations, trials, hurt, and hate we do not cave in but are able to standup and live strong.

As with the roly-poly, there are moments that come in our lives when we are just overwhelmed by those things going on around us — like for instance when the landscape of your life is moved,

the dirt around your home is shaken, and the rocks you have depended on are lifted. You wonder what in the world is happening. Suddenly you are picked up, and there is nothing that you can do about it except roll up in that shell. For the roly-poly it is the neatest little gray ball that literally will roll across the floor, but he is doing it for protection.

Have you ever been there and wondered where you can turn, what you can do, and conclude that the only thing that you can do is just pull yourself within the shell of faith? You do not have answers for the problems. You ask why, what, what next and no answers come except to trust God. Your life seems to be rolling in every direction and most of it is rolling out of control. Amazingly, you find a peace in all of the upheaval. It is more than just trusting God and rolling with the punches, it is trusting God and knowing that He has a provision of faith that will hold us, protect us, and bless us until our world settles down.

There is a third line of security for the little roly-poly and that is the little hole or burrow that they have made for themselves and their family. Have you ever listened to Scriptures that come in our songs that talk about God

being a strong rock or us hiding in the cleft of the rock? The old Gospel song that we used to sing that said, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee, is expressing that biblical truth. God provides for us a way of escape, a shelter, a place to hide, a hope when there is no hope, and a power that is beyond us, beyond our circumstances in which we can hide our lives. From day to day and from experience to experience you may find yourself needing that outer armor, or at times rolling up in that shell that fully protects you in faith, or maybe to get somewhere away from all of the chaos hidden in the heart of God.

I got to thinking about the roly-poly and thought about the significance of what God may be trying to say to me and maybe too many of us in times when things seem to be in such an upheaval. You can find a war being waged in almost any sector of the planet. You can see disease taking its toll, drought and famine affecting people, and even here in our own land the unbelievable challenges that we all face related to economy, gas prices, food costs, incredible healthcare expenses, and on and on the problems come like tidal waves.

What can we do and what will we do? We might all pause long enough to realize that if God is so good and so caring that He would provide safety and security for a little mindless creature called the roly-poly, He will certainly care for you and me. Trust Him and live this day in His great strength.

The author can be contacted at [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).

## MS POSITIONS

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resume to personnel committee, 712 McAllister St., Greenville, MS 38701, or email to [parkviewp@bellsouth.net](mailto:parkviewp@bellsouth.net).

**PELAHATCHIE BAPTIST CHURCH** is seeking a part-time Minister of Music for Worship Services, Adult, youth, and children's choirs. Please forward resume to the Pelahatchie Baptist Church, search committee, P O Box 876, Pelahatchie, MS 39145, attn: Due McKinion. Email: [due@rankincounty.org](mailto:due@rankincounty.org).

**HOLCOMB BAPTIST CHURCH**, Holcomb, Miss., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please send resume to Holcomb Baptist Church, attention youth search committee, 109 Highway 35 Sixth, Holcomb, MS 38940.

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**ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR YOUTH AND** Family Ministry. FBC, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, is receiving resumes for this position through August 15, 2008. The position description can be viewed at the website: [www.fbcark.org](http://www.fbcark.org). Resumes and letters of introduction can be emailed to [fbc@iocc.com](mailto:fbc@iocc.com) or mailed to FBC, 623 Pine Street, Arkadelphia, Arkansas 71923.

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# Miss. ministry assistants meet for annual conference

By Linda Jenkins  
Correspondent

For two days in April, Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton was bustling with fun, activities, and learning experiences, and not in the typical setting for a children's or youth camp.

Ministry assistants, church secretaries, agency, and association office workers from across Mississippi gathered for their annual conference on April 7-8. Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Association (MBMAA) and the Pastor/Leadership Development Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), this year's conference planners/coordinators were Linda Coleman of Center Ridge Church in Yazoo City, and Kay McDonnell, ministry assistant for the Pastor/Leadership Development Department.

The conference theme was Bloom Where You Are Planted, based on 1 Peter 4:10: "Each one should use what ever gift he (she) has received to serve (minister) to others."

Featured speaker for the general sessions was Sandra Sartor, popular conference leader and instructor/ministry assistants specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. Worship music was under the direction of John Clendinning, adult consultant in the MBCB Sunday School Department.

Ministry assistants chose from eight different breakout sessions. Topics included Understanding Ministry Through Spiritual Gifts; The Ministry of Encouragement; Looking Your Best for Ministry (Fashion); Knowing Your Ministry (first-time secretaries); Maintaining Your Ministry (prayer and Bible study); Ministry of Hospitality; Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Resources; and Planning for Your Retirement.

An elegant banquet on Monday night paid tribute to all the former directors, consultants, and ministry assistants of the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department (now Pastor/Leadership Development Department) and their spouses.

The current department director, Alan Woodward, was the featured speaker. Special entertainment was provided by Clendinning and his wife Lori. Ministry assistants around the state with 25 years or more of service were also given special recognition.



**NEW OFFICERS** — Elected to serve as officers of the Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Association for the coming year include (Back row, from left) Margie Fuson, Warren Yazoo Assns., Area 5 Representative; Donna Wicker, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, Area 9 Representative; Sandy Cammack, Central Church, McComb, Area 7 Representative; Maggie Lou Wilson and Jan Nall, Monticello Church, Area 8 Representatives; Julia Field, Meadowood Church, Amory, Area 2 Representative; Robbie Linley, Winston Assn. Louisville, second vice-president; (front row, from left) Kay McDonnell, MBCB, Baptist Building Representative; Lula McCaa, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, Area 9 Representative; Betty Anne Bailey, retired, Chaplain; Cindy Lofton, First Church, Carthage, Treasurer; Shirley Sisk, First Church, Houston, Area 4 Representative; Linda Coleman, Center Ridge Church, Yazoo City, President; Sandi Komurke, First Church, Madison, Secretary. (Photo by Tony Martin)

The MBMAA general business meeting, a silent auction, door prizes, an on-site LifeWay Christian Store, lots of good food and refreshments, and Christian fellowship added to the experience and made the annual gathering a highlight of the spring for those in attendance.

For more information on MBMAA, contact Kay McDonnell at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-5030. Telephone: (601) 292-3305 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 305. E-mail: kmcdonnel@mbcb.org.

## NOBTS to offer bivo music course at Mississippi locations

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — The fifth of eight courses at five locations for Mississippi bivocational music leaders, sponsored by New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) and Providence Learning Center, will begin August 18.

The fifth course, Hymnology, will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks. The eight courses in the cycle are Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Music Resources Class Voice.

The courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no pre-requisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a certificate from the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

There is a one-time enrollment fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$125.00. A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

The course will meet at the following locations and times:

- Broadmoor Church, Madison, beginning August 25 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Jimmy McCaleb, teacher, (601) 924-1233.
- First Church, Booneville, beginning August 26 (7-9 p.m.). LuAnne Ford, teacher, (662) 728-6272.
- Northcrest Church, Meridian, beginning

August 18 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Buddy McElroy, teacher, (601) 681-6615.

- First Church, Greenwood, beginning August 26 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Barry Bouchillon, teacher (662) 453-5935.
- Easthaven Church, Brookhaven, beginning August 18 (7-9 p.m.). Mark Hamilton, teacher (601) 894-5848.

For more information, contact the location's teacher or Jimmy McCaleb, Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail: jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

## IMB missionary takes ill, dies in Brazil

RICHMOND, Va. (BP and local reports) — Elaine Lambach, age 49, a missionary serving in Brazil through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB), died after a brief illness on July 14. Lambach, a mother of five, was serving in church and home outreach evangelism in the seaport city of Belém in northern Brazil. She died after being rushed to a hospital in the city.

She and her husband Paul have served on the mission field together 10 years. Paul is a church planter who teaches at the Agulha Baptist Bible Institute and the Equatorial Baptist Theological Seminary, where he is the head of the missions department.

Lambach's death was the second to impact the South America region in just over a week. Gregory Gomez IV, a summer missionary from the University of Mississippi's Baptist Student Union in Oxford, was

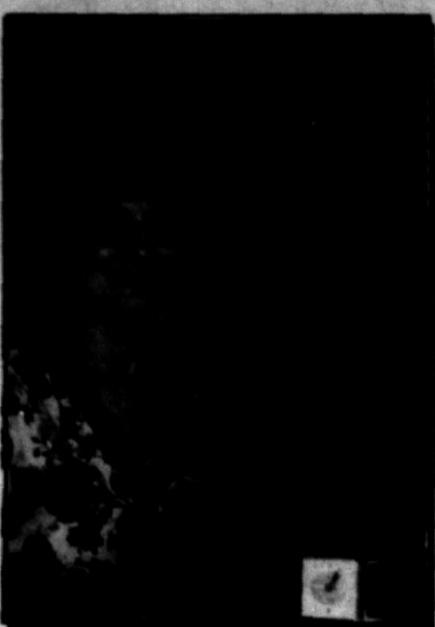
serving in Peru when he was killed in a vehicle accident on July 5.

Born Elaine Samples in Morristown, Tn., Lambach worked in Memphis as a physical therapist at Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center, the Special Kids Program, and Les Passee Children's Rehabilitation Center. She attended Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tn. and Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tn. She graduated from the University of Tennessee in Memphis with a degree in physical therapy.

In addition to her husband, Lambach is survived by her children: Joseph, serving in the military; Jonathan, a student at Union University in Jackson, Tn.; David, a recent high school graduate; Rachel, 12; and Hannah, 9.

Funeral services were held July 26 at First Church in Morristown.

## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Ray recognition,  
McBee Church



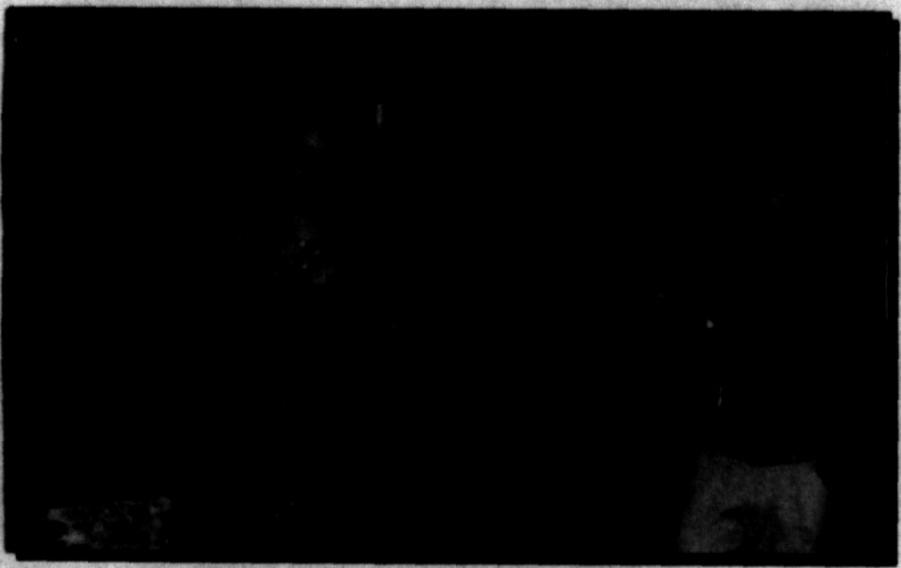
2. New Prospect Church  
Bible drillers



3. Luau, Parkway Church



4a. Children's Bible drillers, Mt. Comfort Church



4b. Youth Bible drillers, Mt. Comfort Church



1. McBee Church, Columbus, presented pastor Jim Ray and his wife Shirley with a clock in recognition of nine years of ministry June 22.
2. New Prospect Church, Hamilton, recognizes its state Bible drillers. From left, Alix Goodwin, Raimi Bryan, and Alison Atkins.
3. The wMu of Parkway Church, Morton, recently held a luau for ladies to promote wMu and missions. Shown are some of the participants.

4. Mt. Comfort Church, Bruce, recognizes its youth Bible drillers: from left, Teresa Harrelson, Rebekah Baker, Janae Harrelson, and Benjamin Baker; and its children's drillers: Debbi Harrelson, Mystei Tatum, Kayde Coleman, and Savannah Smith.
5. Crossgates Church, Brandon, will host the SPLAT Experience Aug. 10, 9:30 and 11 a.m. This is a "YouTube phenomenon" in which music, paint, and light are used to tell the story of God's plan for humanity. For more information, call (601) 825-2562 or visit [www.crossgates.org](http://www.crossgates.org).

6. McAdams Church, McAdams, recognized Earl Mitchell for 57 years as service as a deacon, 37 of those at McAdams. Shown are Mitchell and pastor James Young.
7. Holcomb Church, Holcomb, ordained Robby Rikard June 29. Shown are the Rickards and Bob Johnson, pastor.

8. First Church, Ripley, honored Associate Pastor/Minister of Music Tom Young on his tenth anniversary of service. He was given a plaque and a check from the church, along with a fish fry and roast in his honor. Shown are John Stanford, Young, Beverly Young, and pastor Rex Yancey.

9. Meadville Church, Meadville, retired and burned the note on their new fellowship hall and youth buildings July 6. Shown are Charles Calcote, John Farris, Dana Lewis, Ethel Dillon, Chuck McMinn, Jim Nix, and interim pastor Emory May.



6. Mitchell and Young



7. Rikard ordination, Holcomb Church



8. Young recognition, First Church, Ripley



9. Note burning, Meadville Church

## JUST FOR THE RECORD



11. Hurricane Creek Church youth



12. Hollandale Church, Hollandale



13. Mt. Pleasant Church youth



14. RAs, Morton

10. Gumpond Church, Lumberton, is collecting stories and photos for their 75 year memory book, and also recipes for a commemorative cookbook. Stories and photos can be mailed to Hubert Ladner, 87 Edmund Jones Rd., Lumberton, MS 39455 or emailed to hladner@bellsouth.net; recipes can be mailed to Gumpond Baptist Church, 898 Gumpond Beall Rd., Lumberton, MS 39455 or emailed to longinos5@the-lifeline.net with Recipes for cookbook in subject line.

11. The youth of Hurricane Creek Church, Sandy Hook, led in the morning worship service as the kick-off for VBS on June 22. Shown are the participants.

12. The ladies of Hollandale Church, Hollandale, met for a time of prayer and honored Chip, Elizabeth, Julia, and Andrew Henley with a shower on their return home from mission work in Moldova.

13. The youth from Mt. Pleasant Church, Bogue Chitto, recently attended Centrifuge in Greenville, South Carolina. Shown are the participants.

14. The RAs of Branch Church and North Morton Church, Morton, recently attended camp at Central Hills, Kosciusko. Shown are Issac Cannon, Austin Coward, Steven Barthel, Hunter Ragan, Garrett Measels, and Tyler Mahaffey.

15. West Marks Church, Marks, sent 16 members on a mission trip to Rhode Island to help church planters Clark and Valerie Rumfelt during the week of July 4. Shown are the participants.

16. First Church, Ovett, entered a team in Relay for Life May 2, with the church raising \$700 for the American Cancer Society. Shown are the participants.

17. Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa, sent a mission team to Luque, Paraguay, and Posadas, Argentina, to help in VBS, home Bible studies, worship services, and tract and flyer distribution. Shown, kneeling, are Amber LaForce, Kelli LaForce, and Micaa Bowen; standing, James LaForce, Debbie Richardson, Dennis Griffin, Jan Griffin, and pastor Todd Bowen.



15. West Marks Church mission workers



16. First Church, Ovett



17. Escatawpa Church mission trip

18. Scott Johnson, pastor of Enon Church, Batesville, preached in his overalls for Pack a Pew Sunday.



MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS



18. Johnson, Enon Church

# Brown to address Agricultural Development Foundation

Jim Brown, U.S. Director of Baptist Global Response (BGR) in Nashville, will be the featured speaker for the Agricultural Development Foundation meeting to be held at Camp Whispering Pines in Citronelle, Al., on August 9 at 9:30 a.m.

Prior to assuming this position, Brown was director of the World Hunger Office of the International Mission Board in Richmond. In his present position he directs the U.S. operations of Baptist Global Response (BGR), a Southern Baptist international relief and development organization with international headquarters in Singapore.

Founded in 2006 by a group of Southern Baptists who have a heart for seeing a visible, credible, coordinated Southern Baptist effort in

international relief and development, the desire of BGR is to help Southern Baptists become more effective and efficient in responding to global needs, whether created by acute situations such as the recent earthquake in China and the cyclone in Myanmar or chronic problems such as poverty, AIDS, and hunger.

The meeting is open to anyone who wishes to learn more about this new organization and how it is responding to needs around the world. For more information, contact Carol Wright, Men's Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.

Visit us online at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org)  
to learn about all  
Mississippi Baptist mission opportunities.



## REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. Clear Creek Church, Lamar: Homecoming and revival, Aug. 3 - 8; Sun., Don Worsham, speaker, followed by covered dish lunch and music by Saving Grace; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; John McMullen, speaker; Mike DeVore, music; Jim Polk, pastor.
2. Rock Hill Church, Brandon: Revival, Aug. 1 - 3; Fri. - Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and afternoon service; Barry Wilkerson, speaker; T.R. Darsey, music; Mark Dearman, pastor.
3. Thomastown Church, Thomastown: Homecoming, Aug. 3; worship, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and afternoon singing.
4. Leflore Church, Holcomb: Revival, beginning Aug. 3; Wayne Gullet, speaker; Ray Mattox, pianist; for information, call Larry Livingston, (662) 227-1259.
5. Centerville Church, Greenwood: Homecoming, Aug. 3; Glen Johnson, speaker, followed by lunch and music by Second Chance, 1 p.m.
6. First Church, Ovett: Homecoming, Aug. 3; Tommy Mangum, speaker, followed by lunch and afternoon singing and reminiscence; Richard Bates, interim pastor.
7. Crooked Creek Church, Silver Creek: Homecoming, Aug. 3; Freeman Pearce, speaker, followed by fellowship meal and music by Calm Assurance. Chad Carney, pastor.
8. Main Street Church, Goodman: Revival, Aug. 3 - 6; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Charles Gaines, speaker; Keith & Julie Leech, music; John W. Parker, pastor.
9. Concord Church, Little Yazoo: Homecoming and revival, Aug. 3 - 6; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 1 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Porter, speaker; John Burke, music; Thomas R. Arinder, pastor.
10. West Church, West: Homecoming, Aug. 3, 11 a.m.; James Culpepper, speaker; James Burrell, pastor.
11. Society Hill Church, Oakvale: Homecoming revival, Aug. 3 - 8; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Darel Daniels, speaker.
12. Murphy Creek Church, Winston County: Revival, Aug. 3 - 6; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Charlie Cooper, speaker; Scott Gregory, music; Walter Simmons, pastor.
13. Sardis Church, Smith Association: Homecoming and revival, Aug. 3 - 6; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon singing; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Ed Deuschle, speaker; Jimmy McCaleb, music.



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## STAFF CHANGES

1. Evergreen Church, Shubuta, has called Dustin Hollingshead as youth minister. Shown are Hollingshead and pastor John Franklin.
2. Enon Church, Batesville, called Scott Johnson as pastor Apr. 27. Shown are Johnson, wife Beth, and son Brayden.



1. Hollingshead and Franklin



2. Johnson family

## SEATS STILL LEFT on these Four - 2008 Tours

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Green Mountains of Vermont	Hershey
Gettysburg	Amish Country
White Mountains of New Hampshire	"In the Beginning"
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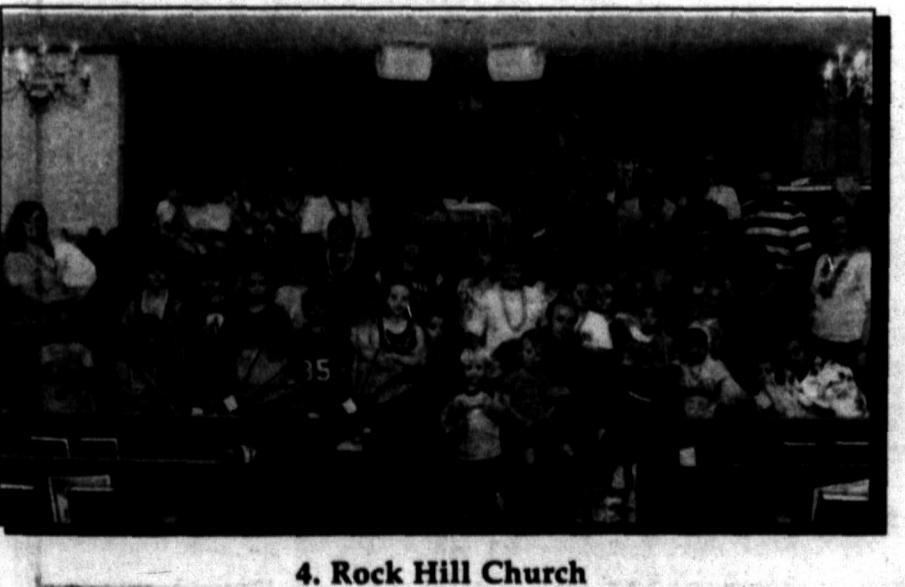
**1. Franklin Creek Church**



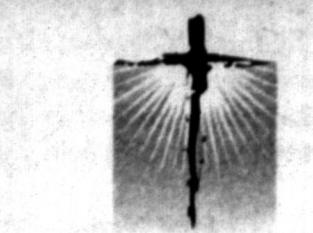
**2. Pleasant Hill Church**



**3. Coldwater Church**



**4. Rock Hill Church**



## MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. **Franklin Creek Church, Moss Point:** July 14 – 18; average attendance, 102; John Pemberton, pastor; Jerry Smith, director.
2. **Pleasant Hill Church, Union Church:** Saturdays, June 14 – July 12; 32 enrolled, with an average attendance of 27. This was the first VBS for the church in 20 years. Donald Pouns, pastor and VBS director.
3. **Coldwater Church, Philadelphia:** June 18 – 21; mission offering went to food for the Neshoba Baptist Center.
4. **Rock Hill Church, Brandon:** June 8 – 12; 83 average attendance, 8 professions of faith.
5. **Branch Church, Morton:** July 13 – 17; classes offered for 1's through adults.
6. **Clear Creek Church, Lamar:** Mission offering of \$260 went to Burnt Ridge Community Church, Clinton, Ark., which was damaged by a tornado Feb. 5.
7. **Lakeside Church, Hattiesburg:** June 2 – 6; average attendance, 75; Roy Moody, pastor.
8. **Bunker Hill Church, Columbia:** 141 children and workers, 51 youth and 54 adults at this year's VBS.



**5. Branch Church**



**6. Clear Creek Church**



**7. Lakeside Church**



**8. Bunker Hill**



**VBS  
2008**

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## THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

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(601) 922-2242

[www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com)

### GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

The Baptist Children's Village would like to thank the following individuals for their gifts of honor and memory:

**June 24 - July 9, 2008**

#### HONORS

Perry Atherton  
Mrs. Virginia H. Atherton  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Baker  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Mrs. Camille Barranco  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Master Sean Cabrera  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Mr. Wayne Castleberry  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Ms. Voncile Cowart  
Mrs. Carmen Green  
Charlie Frayer  
Mr. Robert T. Jeffries  
Mr. Jimmy Gault  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Faye Gipson  
Sharon Dungan  
Mrs. Annie Laurie Gunter  
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Mr. & Mrs. Arden Hill  
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Mr. & Mrs. B. W. Hill  
Mrs. Edwin A. Watson  
Fred & Gail Jabor  
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Mr. Michael King  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Irene Lancaster  
Eloise Crossleys SSC, FBC-Columbus  
Mr. Durwood Long  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Mrs. Kathy Paulk  
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Mr. Gene Sturgis  
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Mrs. Jacqueline M. Waggoner  
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Mrs. Melanie White  
Dr. & Mrs. Linuel D. Jayroe  
Sue Shivers Worthy  
Sharon Dungan

#### MEMORIALS

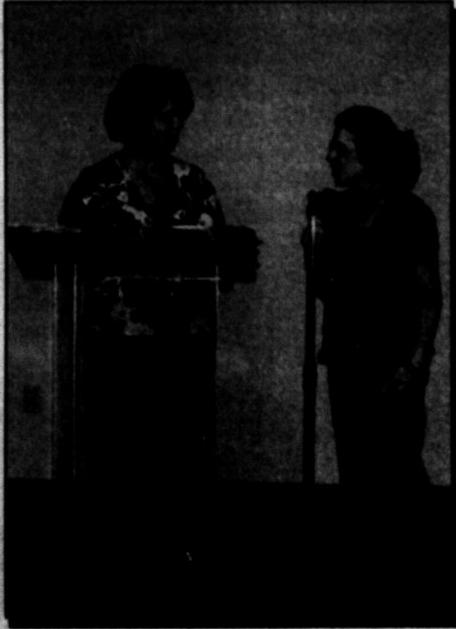
N Columbia BC-2008 Deceased Members  
Adult III SSC, N Columbia BC  
George B. Arnold  
Stanton Baptist Church-Natchez  
Mr. Roddy Bailey  
Richie & Frances Defenbaugh  
Exie Mae Ball  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry E. Breakfast  
James Ball  
Harry Neal & Weezie Corder  
Dr. Robert Barnes, Sr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Dungan & Family  
Hall Barret, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O. Crosthwait Jr.  
Christine Blankinship  
Cecil & Frances Byrd  
Jack Brent  
Mr. & Mrs. Lindsay B. Lampton  
Sarah S. Brister  
Kay & Ben McPherson  
Linda Burns  
Antioch BC-Women's Bible Study  
Mrs. Thelma Campbell  
Harry Lott's SSC, Holcomb BC  
Minnie Carter  
Mr. & Mrs. James Round  
Faye Chance  
Linda & Dorothy Wright  
Tom Clark  
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Mrs. Hiram Davis, Jr.  
Marvin Delaney  
Mr. Joe A. Combs III  
Mrs. Annie Laurie Edgar  
Ms. Sharon R. Brockenbrough  
Iva Love Thomas Ellis  
Mr. & Mrs. William A. Switzer

Alumni enjoyed hearing a challenge from WLBT-TV 3 Chief Meteorologist Barbie Bassett and lunch before touring the campus and reminiscing through archives. Alumni get together bi-annually. Pictured with Bassett is Alumni President and BCV Public Relations Director Chrystelle Thames.

Mrs. Mary Kathryn P. Embry  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A. Ligon Jr.  
Mr. M. E. Brewer  
Mr. & Mrs. Lyle V. Corey Jr.  
Mildred Frederick  
Chris & Sandra Frederick  
Bobby Fisher, Sr.  
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June Gant  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L. Scruggs  
Danny Gremi  
Mr. & Mrs. Ricky Pullen  
Mr. Bobby Gordon  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Russum  
Bob Goshorn  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L. Scruggs  
Cled Gregory  
Ricbie & Frances Defenbaugh  
Doolittle  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack McRee  
Queenie Hamel  
John & Nancy Miller  
Mr. Milton Hamilton  
Mr. & Mrs. Tom W. Doolittle  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack McRee  
Queenie Hamel  
John & Nancy Miller  
Mr. Milton Hamilton  
Mr. & Mrs. Tom W. Doolittle  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Hardy  
Gordon Harris  
Judy & Dave Lacy  
John Hartcock  
Ms. Maggie L. Mahaffey  
Emma Grace Hayes  
Ms. Martha Moore  
Jane Hearon  
Mrs. Nelda Hardage  
Dan Hembree  
Mrs. Louise M. Williamson  
Mrs. Miron Hill  
East Louisville Baptist Church  
James "Pap" Hood  
Wallace & Judy Hillhouse  
Mr. Theo Humphreys  
Reggie, Toofie, Cory & Adam Smith  
Mrs. Delphia Inman  
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Linda & Dorothy Wright  
Melvin Maharrey  
Mrs. Vangie Fields  
Mr. Martin  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore III  
Jake Mashburn  
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Mr. & Mrs. Rhen W. Pierce  
Kenneth "Ken" Lavern  
McClafflin  
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Jimmy McCool  
Glenda McCool Rogers  
Mr. William Roper  
Dr. & Mrs. Robert M. Harvey  
Tommie Jean Ryan  
Mrs. Edna M. Gilliland  
Mrs. Lois Sanderson  
Robert & Marilyn Dillard  
Mr. Charles Shelton  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion  
Robert Earl Speed  
Mrs. Irene V. Thompson  
Jane Starks  
Ms. Billie C. McCully  
Gabe Stewart  
Rev. & Mrs. Sterling N. Davis

Mr. Ruben Hodnett of Straight Bayou Baptist Church, Anguilla with the help of his brothers Dewitt and Gene delivered nearly 2000 pounds of tomatoes donated by Mr. Jimmy Meeks and Mr. James Meeks of Triple M Farms of Hamburg, Arkansas. Mrs. Chrystelle Thames, BCV Director of Public Relations, is pictured helping unload the tomatoes.



## The Family Link E-Newsletter

August 1, 2008, The Baptist Children's Village will launch The Family Link, an electronic newsletter. The newsletter will contain information that is beneficial in building up families as well as provide information and updates from The Baptist Children's Village. To subscribe, please go to [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com). For those without email, who would like to subscribe, please complete and mail the form below to Celeste Cade, Public Relations Associate or call 601-922-2242.

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## Going Back to School

Summer is quickly winding down and school is on the horizon. Of course, getting kids ready for school is a big deal at The Baptist Children's Village. We must get children on seven campuses prepared. Therefore, The Baptist Children's Village staff has compiled a list of school supply needs based on our current inventory and the supply lists sent from the area schools. We are pleased to accept Wal-Mart gift cards and monetary donations as well. Items can be delivered to any campus and all monetary donations should be mailed to The BCV, P.O. Box 27, Clinton, MS 39060 or for your convenience donations can be made online at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).

### 2008-2009 School Supply List\*

- Large backpacks for teenagers
- 10 Large Clear Backpacks for Deanash Campus
- College ruled loose leaf paper
- Facial tissue
- Hand sanitizer
- Gallon freezer bags
- Quart freezer bags
- Clorox bleach wipes
- Baby wipes
- Paper towels
- Fine tip and regular sized Sharpies
- Science fair boards

#### School fees:

- Yearbook Costs
- \$30 Jr. High.
- \$50 Sr. High
- School Pictures \$20
- ACT Test Fees \$28

\*Because of many generous donors, we are not in need of pens, pencils, glue or crayons at this time.

# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## A Focused Life

**Hebrews 1:1 – 6, 10 – 14; 2:1 – 4**

By Tony Martin

Hebrews is a controversial book in the sense that the author is not identified. Commentators and scholars have suggested Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, Priscilla, and Paul. Most scholars have discounted Paul as an author, because Paul identifies himself in his other epistles, and the style is different. Nevertheless, most believe the author was close to Paul.

Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. The book discusses how Jesus was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, although the Jews of that period rejected the idea that Jesus was Messiah.

Verses 1 and 2 address this. God spoke to Isaiah in visions, Jacob through dreams, and Abraham and Moses face to face. The Jews expected God to contin-

ue to reveal Himself to his people, but the idea of Him wrapping Himself in flesh and becoming human was more than they could grasp. Jesus is God Himself. God's glory is the revelation of who He is and what He is like. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus, who is the earthly revelation of God. Jesus also made provision for the cleansing of sin. Verse 3 draws the connection between His creative power and His saving power.

Verses 4 through 6 deal with the uniqueness of Jesus. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. In Jewish tradition, the firstborn son held the highest place among any other children. In this context, Jewish Christians would have a clear understanding of the pre-eminence of Jesus. The author of Hebrews takes great pains to



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point out that Jesus was superior to any other created being, including angels (v.6). Angels were exalted beings, especially because they were involved in giving God's law at Sinai. During a visit to Israel, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with the Dead Sea

Scrolls. Those ancient writers wrote of their expectation that the archangel Michael would be a leader in the Messianic kingdom, so to suggest that Jesus was supreme over angels might have given the Jews of this time pause.

The author of Hebrews continues by affirming Jesus' position as creator in vv. 10 – 14, and in the position of Jesus among angels. Those who were reading Hebrews could take comfort in that Christ was changeless (v. 12). They were encouraged to understand that Jesus was the one source of security they could count on. We as Christians can count on standing on the firmest foundation in creation. Christ's nature will never change. He continually loves us, He is just

and merciful, and this is comfort indeed. Again, the writer discusses the place of angels in verses 13 and 14. Some teachers in the early church taught that God could only be approached through angels. As a result, their followers believed that angels were worthy of worship, and that Jesus was an angel Himself of the highest order. Jesus is God, and is alone worshipful. Angels were messengers, were created by God, and under His authority. The roles of angels are clear in scripture: to serve believers, to proclaim God's messages, and to execute His judgment. Christ reigns, and angels were to minister to those who serve.

Hebrews 2:1 – 4 is primarily a warning against drifting away from the faith. The writer begins with what will be the first of five warnings spaced throughout the book. Christians are encouraged, if not commanded, to listen carefully to what God says. Obviously, God's words are more important than any words we might hear from angels or man. God offers pardon from sins, and we must trust Him for our lives, both now and in the future.

As previously noted, God sent His words by angels, but now the Word had become flesh. The readers of Hebrews were second-generation Christians who had not seen Jesus during His earthly ministry. We base our beliefs on eyewitness accounts in scripture. People are to obey God's law, and the law made provision for both blessings and punishments. The author states that while the Hebrews earlier faith was good and proper, now their faith was completed in Christ. Angels do not show the way to heaven, nor are they a part of a person's salvation experience. Jesus established His authority through signs and wonders and certainly His resurrection and ascension. We, as believers, are further given gifts of the Holy Spirit which complement – but not supplant – the ministry of God through scripture. When we see God at work through the lives of other believers, we have confidence in His presence and ongoing work.

Martin is associate editor of *The Baptist Record*.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Athens: Facing Questions

Lesson Passages: Acts 17:16-19, 22-31

By W. Wayne VanHorn

For the past two weeks we have focused on places where the early church presented the Gospel, the problems they encountered, and the character they exhibited. The troubles Barnabas and Paul encountered in Galatia revealed their perseverance to share the Gospel. The conflict over whether Gentiles had to obey the Law of Moses was settled in Jerusalem as the young church sought positive resolution to the problem. This week we turn our attention to the city of Athens, the city of philosophers and god worshippers.

On his second missionary journey, Paul was accompanied by Silas. He met Timothy in Lystra and asked him to accompany them. The trio then made their way westward across Galatia toward the Roman province of Asia. However, the Holy Spirit guided them away

from Asia and toward Troas. Here Paul experienced his well-known Macedonian vision. He, Silas, and Timothy sailed toward Macedonia, carrying the Gospel into Europe. They visited cities like Neapolis, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Paul won converts and experienced conflicts. The Jews of Thessalonica stirred up so much trouble, the trio redeployed to Berea. The Jews followed them there as well. So Paul was shipped off to Athens while Silas and Timothy remained in Berea to encourage the new believers.

#### 1. Who God Isn't (Acts 17:16-18)

How do you share your testimony about Jesus in a culture that believes everything but the Gospel? Paul found himself in just such a predicament when he visited the city of Athens. He was bold to present his faith to the Jews in the synagogue, to Gentile



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God-fearers, and to the common Athenians who happened to be in the market place. He also encountered Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, who were baffled by the notion of the resurrection.

The main focus is not so much on what all these groups believed but rather on the fact that, no matter what they believed, Paul was faithful to share the truth about Jesus with them. The Gospel of the Kingdom is for all people with out respect to race, religion, color, creed, or economic status. God isn't just the God of the Jews. He isn't one who favors only Gentile God-fearers. He also isn't a God who ignores those whose philosophies have no room for Him.

#### 2. Who God Is (Acts 17:19, 22-29)

Paul's determination to present the resurrected Lord to all people resulted in his being brought before the town council, the Areopagus. Paul addressed the assembly of leaders as being "too superstitious"

(KJV) or "very religious" (NIV), the Greek can be rendered either way. The King James translation stresses the negative aspect of their idolatry (Acts 17:16), while the NIV presents the quality as a positive aspect that Paul could use to introduce the Gospel. Because the Athenians were "very religious" they might be open to hear about the One who deserved their true religious devotion.

Paul carefully observed the statues in Athens dedicated to various deities, including one to the "Unknown God." Paul then presented to the council members his testimony about the one true God. Notice Paul did not focus primarily on Jesus as this would have made no sense to the Athenians. Instead, he took them right where they were, religious and superstitious about the gods, and he told them of the one true God.

#### 3. How God Is Unique (Acts 17:30-31)

Paul then spoke of the need for repentance, the Day of Judgment, and the righteous judge whom God had appointed. Though Paul did not refer to Jesus by name, we know who he

was talking about because he mentioned how God had raised Him from the dead. This unique God did not need a statue or anything else people could provide (17:24-25). Instead, God was providing what people really needed... deliverance from sin.

Christians today can take encouragement from Paul's example. When we find ourselves being questioned by people with different religious beliefs, we have an opportunity to explain Christianity's uniqueness. Being tolerant should not mean remaining silent because others might be offended by the Gospel. Jesus is the unique gift of God to humankind for salvation. We must expand our understanding of Christianity's uniqueness so we can present the truth in a variety of ways to match the variety of people, places, and situations we encounter. By facing questions that others are asking, we have opportunity to tell our world about Jesus.

VanHorn is dean of the School of Christian Studies & the Arts at Mississippi College and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

# THE BAPTIST RECORD

be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and

white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

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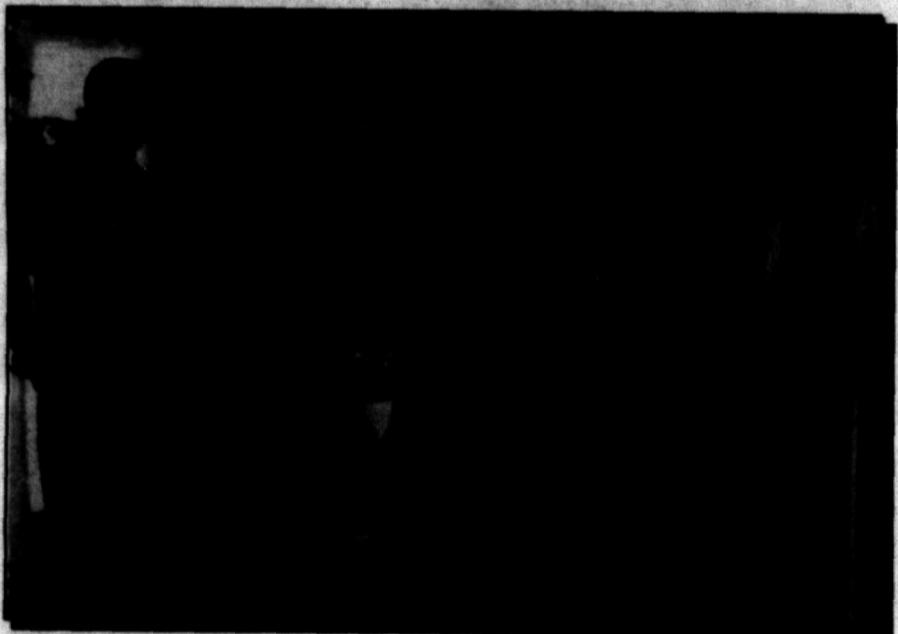
Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



1. Green's Creek Church youth



2. First Church, Pascagoula, Women on Mission



3. Oakland Church construction team



4. Baby dedication, Highland Church

1. The youth of Green's Creek Church, Petal, recently attended the Smokey Mountain Youth Festival, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Shown are the participants.

2. Several members of Women on Mission, First Church, Pascagoula, recently went to Jena, La., to work in the LaSalle Mission House to deliver clothing. Shown are Jeanne Lynn, Laura Jones, Dean Coulter, Nelda Broom, Betty Watts and Kathryn Webb.

3. Oakland Church, Corinth, recently sent an 11-man construction team to New Orleans through the SBC's Operation Noah Rebuild, working on church brick work, home renovations in the 9th Ward, and partial new constructions for Katrina homeowners. Randy Bostick, pastor. Shown are the participants.

4. Highland Church, Crystal Springs, held baby dedications May 11 and June 15. Shown are participants in the May dedication.

5. Eleven youth and three adults from First Church, Magee, participated in Super Summer at Mississippi College in Clinton. Shown are the youth and adults.

6. Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia, recently held a ground-breaking service for their new Family Life Center. Shown are the participants.

7. The children's choir of East Salem Church, Leakesville, presented the musical Salute to America June 28 and 29. Shown are the participants.

8. Pope Church, Pope, recognizes its Bible Buddies Tyler Allen and Ryan McCurdey; children's Bible drillers Tyler Shook and Sean Williams; and youth Bible drillers Amelia Bailey, Haley Beth Allen, Annah Bailey, and Ashley Ellis.



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5. First Church, Magee, youth



6. Bethsaida church ground breaking



7. East Salem Church children's choir



8. Pope Church Bible drillers